

The Council of Trent

The Seventh Session

Celebrated on the third day of the month of March, MDXLVII.

DECREE ON THE SACRAMENTS

Proem.

For the completion of the salutary doctrine on Justification, which was promulgated with the unanimous consent of the Fathers in the last preceding Session, it hath seemed suitable to treat of the most holy Sacraments of the Church, through which all true justice either begins, or being begun is increased, or being lost is repaired. With this view, in order to destroy the errors and to extirpate the heresies, which have appeared in these our days on the subject of the said most holy sacraments,-as well those which have been revived from the heresies condemned of old by our Fathers, as also those newly invented, and which are exceedingly prejudicial to the purity of the Catholic Church, and to the salvation of souls, the sacred and holy, ecumenical and general Synod of Trent, lawfully assembled in the Holy Ghost, the same legates of the Apostolic See presiding therein, adhering to the doctrine of the holy Scriptures, to the apostolic traditions, and to the consent of other councils and of the Fathers, has thought fit that these present canons be established and decreed; intending, the divine Spirit aiding, to publish later the remaining canons which are wanting for the completion of the work which It has begun.

ON THE SACRAMENTS IN GENERAL

CANON I.-If any one saith, that the sacraments of the New Law were not all instituted by Jesus Christ, our Lord; or, that they are more, or less, than seven, to wit, Baptism, Confirmation, the Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Order, and Matrimony; or even that any one of these seven is not truly and properly a sacrament; let him be anathema.

CANON II.-If any one saith, that these said sacraments of the New Law do not differ from the sacraments of the Old Law, save that the ceremonies are different, and different the outward rites; let him be anathema.

CANON III.-If any one saith, that these seven sacraments are in such wise equal to each other, as that one is not in any way more worthy than another; let him be anathema.

CANON IV.-If any one saith, that the sacraments of the New Law are not necessary unto salvation, but superfluous; and that, without them, or without the desire thereof, men obtain of God, through faith alone, the grace of justification; -though all (the sacraments) are not indeed necessary for every individual; let him be anathema.

CANON V.-If any one saith, that these sacraments were instituted for the sake of nourishing faith alone; let him be anathema.

CANON VI. -If any one saith, that the sacraments of the New Law do not contain the grace which they signify; or, that they do not confer that grace on those who do not place an obstacle thereunto; as though they were merely outward signs of grace or justice received through faith, and certain marks of the Christian profession, whereby believers are distinguished amongst men from unbelievers; let him be anathema.

CANON VII.-If any one saith, that grace, as far as God's part is concerned, is not given through the said sacraments, always, and to all men, even though they receive them rightly, but (only) sometimes, and to some persons; let him be anathema.

CANON VIII.-If any one saith, that by the said sacraments of the New Law grace is not conferred through the act performed, but that faith alone in the divine promise suffices for the obtaining of grace; let him be anathema.

CANON IX.-If any one saith, that, in the three sacraments, Baptism, to wit, Confirmation, and Order, there is not imprinted in the soul a character, that is, a certain spiritual and indelible Sign, on account of which they cannot be repeated; let him be anathema.

CANON X.-If any one saith, that all Christians have power to administer the word, and all the sacraments; let him be anathema.

CANON XI.-If any one saith, that, in ministers, when they effect, and confer the sacraments, there is not required the intention at least of doing what the Church does; let him be anathema.

CANON XII.-If any one saith, that a minister, being in mortal sin, -if so be that he observe all the essentials which belong to the effecting, or conferring of, the sacrament, -neither effects, nor confers the sacrament; let him be anathema.

CANON XIII.-If any one saith, that the received and approved rites of the Catholic Church, wont to be used in the solemn administration of the sacraments, may be contemned, or without sin be omitted at pleasure by the ministers, or be changed, by every pastor of the churches, into other new ones; let him be anathema.

ON BAPTISM

CANON I.-If any one saith, that the baptism of John had the same force as the baptism of Christ; let him be anathema.

CANON II.-If any one saith, that true and natural water is not of necessity for baptism, and, on that account, wrests, to some sort of metaphor, those words of our Lord Jesus Christ; Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost; let him be anathema.

CANON III.-If any one saith, that in the Roman church, which is the mother and mistress of all churches, there is not the true doctrine concerning the sacrament of baptism; let him be anathema.

CANON IV.-If any one saith, that the baptism which is even given by heretics in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, with the intention of doing what the Church doth, is not true baptism; let him be anathema.

CANON V.-If any one saith, that baptism is free, that is, not necessary unto salvation; let him be anathema.

CANON VI. -If any one saith, that one who has been baptized cannot, even if he would, lose grace, let him sin ever so much, unless he will not believe; let him be anathema.

CANON VII.-If any one saith, that the baptized are, by baptism itself, made debtors but to faith alone, and not to the observance of the whole law of Christ; let him be anathema.

CANON VIII.-If any one saith, that the baptized are freed from all the precepts, whether written or transmitted, of holy Church, in such wise that they are not bound to observe them, unless they have chosen of their own accord to submit themselves thereunto; let him be anathema.

CANON IX.-If any one saith, that the resemblance of the baptism which they have received is so to be recalled unto men, as that they are to understand, that all vows made after baptism are void, in virtue of the promise already made in that baptism; as if, by those vows, they both derogated from that faith which they have professed, and from that baptism itself; let him be anathema.

CANON X.-If any one saith, that by the sole remembrance and the faith of the baptism which has been received, all sins committed after baptism are either remitted, or made venial; let him be anathema.

CANON XI.-If any one saith, that baptism, which was true and rightly conferred, is to be repeated, for him who has denied the faith of Christ amongst Infidels, when he is converted unto penitence; let him be anathema.

CANON XII.-If any one saith, that no one is to be baptized save at that age at which Christ was baptized, or in the very article of death; let him be anathema.

CANON XIII.-If any one saith, that little children, for that they have not actual faith, are not, after having received baptism, to be reckoned amongst the faithful; and that, for this cause, they are to be rebaptized when they have attained to years of discretion; or, that it is better that the baptism of such be omitted, than that, while not believing by their own act, they should be baptized in the faith alone of the Church; let him be anathema.

CANON XIV.-If any one saith, that those who have been thus baptized when children, are, when they have grown up, to be asked whether they will ratify what their sponsors promised in their names when they were baptized; and that, in case they answer that they will not, they are to be left to their own will; and are not to be compelled meanwhile to a Christian life by any other penalty, save that they be excluded from the participation of the Eucharist, and of the other sacraments, until they repent; let him be anathema.

ON CONFIRMATION

CANON I.-If any one saith, that the confirmation of those who have been baptized is an idle ceremony, and not rather a true and proper sacrament; or that of old it was nothing more than a kind of catechism, whereby they who were near adolescence gave an account of their faith in the face of the Church; let him be anathema.

CANON II.-If any one saith, that they who ascribe any virtue to the sacred chrism of confirmation, offer an outrage to the Holy Ghost; let him be anathema.

CANON III.-If any one saith, that the ordinary minister of holy confirmation is not the bishop alone, but any simple priest soever; let him be anathema.

The canons and decrees of the sacred and ecumenical Council of Trent, Trans. J. Waterworth
London: Dolman, 1848.